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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4051
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 8682
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 1372
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON SECURITY CZAR YASSINE MANSOURI

REF: A. 05 RABAT 303

[1](#)B. USUN 401

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas T. Riley for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador called on Director General of the DGED (Direction General des Etudes and Documentation) on March 8 at DGED headquarters in Rabat. While ostensibly a courtesy call in recognition of Mansouri's appointment as head of DGED in 2005, the meeting provided the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues, including the Western Sahara and the King's recent Africa trip, with a key member of the King's kitchen cabinet. On the Western Sahara, the Ambassador stressed the importance of Morocco producing a credible autonomy plan. Mansouri advised against pre-judging Morocco's autonomy plan, as the King had made very clear that there was to be process of public consultation, which was now underway. The Ambassador and Mansouri agreed that cooperation between the US and Morocco on security was excellent. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador, accompanied by DCM and Polcouns, called on DGED Director General Yassine Mansouri on March 8 at DGED headquarters in Rabat. While the Ambassador and Mansouri have had numerous encounters, including an informal dinner hosted by MOI Deputy Fouad Ali El Himma in early 2005 (Ref A) and a small dinner hosted by General Laanigri on the occasion of FBI Director Mueller's February visit to Morocco (septel), this was the Ambassador's first official call on Mansouri since Mansouri became head of DGED. The mission maintains regular contact with Mansouri on security matters, however.

[1](#)3. (C) Mansouri was relaxed and jovial throughout the 45-minute meeting and warmly welcomed the Ambassador, noting that he was receiving him in his personal office rather than a conference room normally reserved for official calls. Mansouri commented that his visit to Washington in October 2005 had been very successful, and he particularly appreciated meetings with John Negroponte David Welch, Elliot Abrams, and at the Pentagon. He felt there was a good and important level of cooperation between the US and Morocco and thanked the embassy for its strong support of bilateral relations. He looked forward to A/S Welch's March 13-14 visit (comment: subsequently canceled); the Ambassador noted that A/S Welch hoped to see Mansouri during the visit. Mansouri said he would be honored and referred to his exchange of letters with A/S Welch following the Washington

visit, commenting that he appreciated the direct contact with A/S Welch "even if our areas of responsibility don't completely overlap."

Western Sahara

14. (C) The Ambassador raised the Western Sahara, noting that Morocco was in the midst of preparing an autonomy plan and commenting that he was glad that new Moroccan PermRep Sahel had had a chance to call on Ambassador Bolton in New York (Ref B). The Ambassador relayed that the consultations on the Western Sahara underway in Morocco were a good idea, and the US looked forward to seeing Morocco's next autonomy plan. This is a moment, the Ambassador stressed, for Morocco to do something different and help change direction on the Western Sahara.

15. (C) Mansouri said one cannot prejudge how different Morocco's autonomy plan would be from what Morocco had submitted in 2003. King Mohammed had called recently for consultations among political parties and NGOs, and the political parties were in the process of defining their positions. Things were on the right path; consultations could only be positive when pursued in a democratic process. A good comparison, Mansouri said, was the recent political party law, about which there had been substantial debate before the draft law was submitted to parliament. The Ambassador noted that consultations on the FTA had been vigorous, and the MCA needed a similar degree of consultation.

16. (C) The DCM asked Mansouri what were the most difficult aspects of autonomy for Morocco, and did Mansouri believe the plan would contain the right elements for there to be serious engagement with the parties. Mansouri punted, again saying it was difficult to prejudge the outcome since a process of consultation was underway. There needed to be a gestation period. Sheikhs and elected officials in the Sahara were engaged in consultation. The hardest points of the issue for Morocco, he said, are already known.

17. (C) DCM responded that for the Baker Plan to be taken off the table, there needed to be a new plan to replace it, containing elements that were sufficiently interesting and striking for the other side to respond to. Mansouri disagreed with the idea that the Baker Plan was still on the table since Morocco had already rejected it. He countered that Morocco's strategy now focusing on presenting a new autonomy plan. The DCM stressed the importance of Morocco's plan containing enough elements for the US and Morocco's friends to attract the other side into a negotiation. The plan needed to be sufficiently meaty to disrupt the status quo and provide the basis for a new effort to resolve the conflict.

18. (C) Mansouri agreed, noting that the King had a clear vision about the way forward. Implying that the Western Sahara should be seen in this context, Mansouri said the King was vigorously promoting reform -- of the family code, of human rights through the Equity and Reconciliation Commission. This was a new path for Morocco.

19. (C) Comment: at the end of the meeting, Mansouri remarked that he hoped he had answered our questions on the Western Sahara satisfactorily. He said he found the questions as interesting as we might have found his responses.

Security

110. (C) The Ambassador raised security cooperation between the US and Morocco, commenting that our security services work well together. Mansouri agreed that security cooperation was excellent; it would be painfully obvious if it were otherwise (i.e., there were would be more security problems in Morocco). Mansouri said the good cooperation was not limited to the DGED but existed with other agencies as

well, and with the FBI. There were, in fact, no problem areas either in information sharing or in cooperation. With such good collaboration, it was a win-win situation for both sides. The Ambassador agreed the FBI was playing a positive role.

¶11. (C) Mansouri believed the US and Morocco shared the same analysis on security in the region. Both shared concerns about possible terrorism in the Sahel region. Morocco remained concerned about the Polisario as well. Morocco did not want the Sahel to become another Afghanistan.

Africa Trip -----

¶12. (C) The Ambassador asked Mansouri about the King's just completed trip to three African countries (Gambia, Congo Brazzaville, and DROC). Mansouri said it was the first visit by a Morocco king to the two Congos, and the Congolese people were very responsive. King Mohammed is giving Africa a lot of attention in the interest of promoting cooperation. Mansouri said Morocco is not a rich country but can impart its "savoir faire" (know-how) and experience in diverse fields such as banking and agriculture. The people in the three stops appreciated the King's visit. The King also sought to emphasize reform.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador agreed Morocco had much to offer other African countries. He recalled that Morocco had extended assistance to neighboring countries during the locust plague last year. During their July 2004 meeting in Washington, President Bush had told King Mohammed he could be a leader in the region -- not just in the Middle East but also in Africa.

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Riley